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BIG HEAT THING

NEXT BIG THING Heat 3

Mojo's

Sunday, November 7, 1999.

Many audience members had arrived early enough to witness **Badge's** sonic-muscle approach during soundcheck, but during their 20 minute set, the band favoured a popperescent style that relied on harmonics both vocal and riff-based. Badge have great technique, but the songs sounded as if they had been forced into 'pop' slavery and were considering revolt.

The sound of **Caddis** is as uncompromising as their performance is physical, with vocalist Mark Bakovic one of two active local performers who approach the energy of Declan 'Medic!' Barry (Botticelli's, NIL). Bakovic's chest houses one mighty set of lungs — and quite possibly a rubber duck or two. The Korny comparisons levelled at this band are bunglingly simplistic and tonight's set was as solid as ever.

Flavour Of The Month, well known and appreciated in the local acoustic scene, were disadvantaged in competitive 'impact' terms, as their combination of acoustic/vocal harmonies had inherently soothing qualities that made their set the equivalent of a chill-out session. In comparison, the genre sliding following act could only be described as a **Lateral Drift**. The funky mish mash included *Rev*, a pseudo afro/reggae treat, ending with a jazzy farewell number. "Thank you, boys."

Until this point, the audience had observed standard comp etiquette, cheering on their friends but limiting their range from polite interest to quiet appreciation at most other times. With two bands left, the audience was seemingly struck by a natural impulse to commit acts of wanton camaraderie, like dancing. As a sponsored *Healthways*, *SmokeFree* and *DrinkSafe* event, there is no other scientific explanation for their behaviour.

Despite their proficiency, **Nectar's** inability to make significant headway over the last couple of years is largely a matter of fashion.



Mark Bakovic of Caddis

Their sound is very slick, almost commercial, the musicianship flattering their soul-funk vocalist. But just as the aural resemblance to Living Colour was becoming uncomfortable, a tune called *Mr. Woof* displayed a near hip-hop sensibility that tipped the scales in their favour.

But not quite enough.

The last act, **Proton**, are not only a band, they are a significant part of the living, audible history of Perth's local music over the last decade (and a DJ). It's a fairly safe bet that many of today's local bands have experienced a definitive rock moment with at least one of the bands from Proton's pedigree, tonight they put that experience into serious action. Proton funkcd it up something cruel, winning over an unfamiliar crowd, who were well pleased at the hi-energy live attack, working in tandem with DJ Paul Malone's vinyl sampler technique and the slippery lyricism of MC Ozzy.

Every year there is a *Next Big Thing*, but there is never a *Sure Thing*. Proton's win at this heat was gratifying, but competitions always throw up surprises along the way. The overall standard was fairly high, the final should be a doozie.

— SABIAN WILDE